

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 71

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED APRIL 16, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator MICHAEL J. DOHERTY

District 23 (Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren)

SYNOPSIS

Creates “Passenger Rail System Study Commission.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** creating the “Passenger Rail System Study
2 Commission.”

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4 **WHEREAS**, There may be an overall lack of coordination, efficiency,
5 and cost-effectiveness in the utilization of the passenger rail system
6 in New Jersey together with commuter rail service provided by rail
7 carriers from surrounding states that serve this State; and

8 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey and its neighboring states of New York and
9 Pennsylvania each have separate transportation agencies and
10 separate passenger rail lines and infrastructures which are costly to
11 operate and maintain; and

12 **WHEREAS**, There is a need to conduct a thorough and comprehensive
13 study of the passenger rail system in New Jersey to efficiently and
14 cost-effectively utilize the existing rail infrastructure in
15 coordination with commuter rail service provided by rail carriers
16 from surrounding states; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Passenger rail service could be expanded and improved in
18 the region through the unification, consolidation, merging, sharing,
19 and coordination of transit services among the various
20 transportation agencies in the region; and

21 **WHEREAS**, It is in the public interest and benefit to create a body to
22 examine and study the issues involved in creating a more efficient,
23 cost-effective and viable passenger rail system, and to report the
24 results of this study to the Governor and Legislature, with
25 recommendations, where appropriate; now, therefore,

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27 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
28 *State of New Jersey:*

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30 1. There is created a commission to be known as the
31 “Passenger Rail System Study Commission.”

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33 2. The membership shall consist of six public members to be
34 appointed as follows: two members by the Governor with the advice
35 and consent of the Senate, no more than one of whom shall be of
36 the same political party; two members by the President of the
37 Senate, no more than one of whom shall be of the same political
38 party; and two members by the Speaker of the General Assembly,
39 no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party.

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41 3. The commission shall organize as soon as possible after the
42 appointment of the majority of its members, and shall select a
43 chairperson and vice-chairperson from among its members. The
44 chairperson shall appoint a secretary, who need not be a member of
45 the commission. The commission shall meet at the call of the
46 chairperson and hold hearings at the times and in the places it may
47 deem appropriate and necessary to fill its charge.

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1 The members shall serve without compensation, but may be
2 reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of
3 their duties and within the limits of funds available to the
4 commission.

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6 4. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
7 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State department,
8 board, bureau, commission, agency, authority, or other entity, as it
9 may require and as may be available, and to employ stenographic
10 and clerical assistance and incur traveling and other miscellaneous
11 expenses as may be necessary in order to perform its duties, within
12 the limits of funds available to it for its purpose.

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14 5. The purpose of the commission shall be to study and
15 evaluate the passenger rail system in New Jersey and develop
16 recommendations to better utilize the existing rail infrastructure by
17 increasing efficiency and decreasing costs. The commission shall
18 also identify and define the regional issues and concerns relating to
19 the possible unification, consolidation, merging, sharing, and
20 coordination of passenger rail service with commuter rail service
21 provided by rail carriers from the surrounding states, including, but
22 not limited to the following specific areas:

- 23 a. All existing passenger rail lines that serve New Jersey.
24 b. Rail infrastructure consisting of railroad rights-of-way,
25 tracks, bridges, tunnels, signal, control and power systems,
26 terminals, stations and other facilities, structures and equipment.
27 c. Labor costs related to the operation and maintenance of the
28 passenger rail system.
29 d. Rail system operations relating to scheduling, ticket
30 purchases, and passenger logistics.
31 e. The feasibility of unifying, consolidating, merging, sharing,
32 and coordinating passenger rail service in the region.
33 f. The fiscal, operational, and customer service impacts of any
34 proposed recommendations.

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36 6. The commission shall prepare and submit a report containing
37 its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Governor
38 and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the
39 Legislature no later than 18 months after the date of its initial
40 meeting.

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42 7. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately and shall
43 expire 30 days after the commission submits its report and
44 recommendations, as prescribed in section 6 of this joint resolution.

STATEMENT

This joint resolution creates a “Passenger Rail System Study Commission (commission).” The purpose of the commission is to study and evaluate the State’s passenger rail system and to develop recommendations to better utilize the existing rail infrastructure by increasing efficiency and decreasing costs. The commission is also to identify and define issues and concerns relating to the possible unification, consolidation, merging, sharing, and coordination of passenger rail service with commuter rail service provided by rail carriers from the surrounding states.

The joint resolution specifies that the membership of the commission is to consist of six public members to be appointed as follows: two members by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party; two members by the President of the Senate, no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party; and two members by the Speaker of the General Assembly, no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party.

No later than 18 months after the date of its initial meeting, the commission is to submit a report containing its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. The commission is to dissolve 30 days after the issuance of its report.